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what appeared to be two spots very near each other, a little below the equator of the sun towards the west. Upon applying the telescope my conjecture was verified, two large spots appearing in that place and another above the equator towards the east. This last I was unable to perceive without the telescope. There were also five or six smaller spots visible in the instrument.

"*Nov.* 10, 1858."

Note on the Nomenclature of the Minor Planets.

By J. R. Hind, Esq.

A few months since my attention was directed by Sir John Herschel to the inconvenience and confusion which are being gradually introduced into the nomenclature of the minor planets by the acceptance of names, easily mistaken either in speaking or writing for others belonging to planets previously discovered. I have been fully sensible of the liability to error or misapprehension thereby induced, and am desirous of recording a protest against any further continuance of what must eventually become a positive nuisance to those who are more particularly occupied with the observations and calculations bearing upon this numerous group of planets.

Thus we have already:—

Thetis, Themis; Lutetia, Lætitia; Iris, Isis; Vesta, Hestia; Pallas, Pales.

It will naturally be the wish of every discoverer of a planet that his *enfant trouvé* should be known to posterity by the name which it has borne during his lifetime; but if the practice to which allusion is here made be suffered to continue much longer, there is certainly a probability that a day will arrive when, for the sake of their general convenience, astronomers will consign these troublesome names to oblivion, and substitute others less liable to engender confusion. This consideration alone, we might suppose, would prove sufficiently powerful to induce hesitation on the part of the discoverer before accepting any name likely to be objected to on the score of similarity with that of a planet previously found.

Nov. 11, 1858.

Letter addressed to the Secretary by Sir J. F. W. Herschel. Read and published by his request.

"In the fourth edition of my *Outlines of Astronomy*, p. 337, in which the discovery of *Hyperion* (*Saturn's* eighth satellite) is mentioned as there recent, the discovery is attributed to Mr. Dawes and Professor Bond, without any mention of Mr. Lassell,

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in whose observatory and with whose instruments, by the joint observations both of Mr. Lassell and Mr. Dawes, the discovery was made.

"The passage was written very hastily, in the absence of any possibility of reference to books or letters, and under the urgency of very pressing public business, and has, unfortunately, been passed uncorrected in the new edition of that work recently published. My attention having been drawn to the point by a mutual friend of all the parties, I think it due to them, as well as to the Society to which I have the honour to belong, to offer this explanation of what must otherwise appear a singular piece of injustice."

There were exhibited at the Meeting a series of stereoscopic photographs of the moon, which had been executed in the first instance by Mr. De La Rue, and were subsequently enlarged by Mr. R. Howlett to eight inches diameter from the original negatives. The stereoscope in which they were viewed was manufactured by Messrs. Smith, Beck, and Beck.

The instrument was of similar construction to Wheatstone's reflecting telescope; but the objects being transparent, the usual arrangements and adjustments were considerably modified. Prisms with slight curvatures worked on the surfaces were employed instead of mirrors for combining the pictures. The photographs were capable of being resolved; and the illumination was effected by Tyler and Son's new Belmontine lamps, large mirrors being provided for daylight.

The appearance of rotundity over the whole surface of the moon is perfect; and parts which are as plane surfaces in the single photograph in the stereoscope present the most remarkable undulations and irregularities.

By desire of Mr. De La Rue, the instrument is now on view at Smith, Beck, and Beck's, 6 Coleman Street, where it can be seen through by any one interested in the subject.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS.

The *Nautical Almanac* for 1862 has recently been published. The usual Supplement containing the ephemerides of the minor planets for the proximate year, appears in a separate form, the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty having ordered that the volume itself shall be published more in advance than hitherto. By this arrangement the Supplement is published a little later than the volume, but purchasers of the latter may obtain the former by applying any time before the end of 1859, at the *Nautical Almanac* Office, 3 Verulam Buildings, Gray's Inn, London.

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